

While big city daily newspapers and television stations jostle to see how many stories they can cover about war, murder, mayhem and people who have done things they shouldn't, community newspapers such as the Salem Times-Register put on their front pages articles about a hometown student who scored a perfect 1600 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test; what the family of an autistic child is doing at home to help him be as much of a regular kid as possible and Air Force Capt. Matt Stephens' visit while home from Iraq to West Salem Elementary School where he was a fourth-grader and met his future wife.

And so it has been since The Salem Weekly Register was founded in 1854.

Today there are eight papers in the chain, all printed on the company's press in the plant at 1633 W. Main Street in Salem.

Wilson Koeppel and Jeff Stumb purchased the Salem Times-Register and its then-three sister papers in March 2001. The two men had already bought the Christiansburg News Messenger and the Radford News Journal in November 2000. Koeppel's son, Lawson Koeppel, is the bright young general manager of the Salem paper and the five others in Main Street Newspapers that serve communities in the Roanoke Valley.

Today the Salem Times-Register continues as "The only paper that puts Salem first," concentrating on news of Salem and Salem people. In addition, in 2004 the Times Register went online, along with its sister papers, giving former Salem residents across the world a way to keep up with their hometown news.

In 2003 the Times-Register distinguished itself by winning the Virginia Press Association's Sweepstakes Award as the best newspaper out of all the newspapers its circulation size in the state.

The staff continues to bring the people of the Salem area the best in local news, sports coverage, photographs, items about accomplishments by Salem students and adults, business news and advertisements.

Koeppel and Stumb purchased the Salem paper, The Fincastle Herald, The Vinton Messenger and The New Castle Record from Ray and Jeanne Robinson.

For more than 30 years, Ray Robinson, who remains as publisher emeritus, never missed being there when the newspaper rolled off the presses each Wednesday. Because there were only five people in the early years, everybody had to do a little bit of everything.

"The delivery boy was me. The photographer was me. The design and makeup of the papers was me. The assistant pressman was me," Robinson recalled.

Shortly after the Times-Register was founded, like many others it was a casualty of the Civil War and quit publishing in 1861. It was reincarnated as the Roanoke Times, a weekly, in 1866. The paper's name changed with subsequent owners, with more than 14 different publishers and editors over the next few years.

The Register officially merged with the Roanoke Times weekly in 1883. Salem wasn't a one-newspaper town, though. The Salem Sentinel was founded the following year, and according to author Woody Middleton, the two were intensely competitive. "The Times-Register was published each Friday in a two-story frame building on College Avenue adjacent to the Town Hall. The Sentinel came off the press each Tuesday."

Like most small newspapers in the early 1900s, front pages of both papers were filled with national and international news. Readers had to look inside, where coverage of social events and who visited whom got equal space with community developments.

Subscribers paid \$1 a year for their papers.

The Sentinel merged with the Times-Register in 1903 after about six months of the respective editors sniping at each other through their columns.

For 33 years the name of the paper was The Salem Times-Register and Sentinel. Sentinel was dropped from the masthead in 1936 and since then, it has been the Salem Times-Register.

It is with great pride that I congratulate the talented staff that puts out the Salem Times-Register on reaching this milestone and I wish them continued success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER SHAYS

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2004

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, on May 17, I was participating in the World Economic Forum in Amman, Jordan and, therefore, missed three recorded votes.

I take my voting responsibility very seriously and would like the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to reflect that, had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on recorded vote No. 177, "yes" on recorded vote No. 178, and "yes" on recorded vote No. 179.

SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH FAIRNESS ACT OF 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4281, the Small Business Health Fairness Act, which will allow small business to join together to better provide their hardworking employees with health care coverage. This important legislation will solve the serious problem with the growing number of uninsured American workers.

It is reported that as many as 60 percent of America's 43.6 million uninsured are employed in small businesses throughout the country. Over the last few years, small business employers have become unable to provide their workers with affordable health care as a result of the rapid and unjust rise in the cost of health insurance.

As a former small business owner, I understand the plight felt by employers, who want nothing more than to provide employees and their families with quality health care.

The Small Business Health Fairness Act will afford these smaller businesses the same rights that large corporations and unions have and enable their representative associations to form Association Health Plans (AHPs), which will offer health care nationwide to member businesses. AHPs will be crucial in closing the gap the small business community is facing

with the increase of uninsured American workers.

It is imperative that we act now by passing this legislation so that our nation's small business employees can immediately begin receiving health care for their families.

Last year, the House passed a virtually identical bill with strong bipartisan support, but it unfortunately never saw the light of day in the Senate. I am hopeful that this body will pass this measure today, and quickly send it to the Senate for consideration. We can no longer allow these dedicated employees to live and work without health insurance.

I thank the Chairman for giving me time to talk about my strong support of H.R. 4281.

UNDOCUMENTED ALIEN EMERGENCY MEDICAL ASSISTANCE AMENDMENTS OF 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 17, 2004

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I oppose H.R. 3722, the "Undocumented Alien Emergency Medical Assistance Amendments of 2004," because it would establish an unfunded mandate on an already overburdened and under-funded medical care system. Hospital workers would be required to gather several pieces of information from their patients to prove their citizenship, including their fingerprints. This information would then be shared with the Department of Homeland Security, which would be required to monitor the information with a currently non-existent tracking system. This bill aims to create a costly burden on an already stressed medical system.

H.R. 3722 also poses a serious public health threat. The bill would create fear and confusion amongst both documented and undocumented immigrant families, discouraging them from seeking urgent medical care, possibly resulting in severe complications, the spread of infectious diseases and epidemics, and even death. I stand firmly opposed to this troubling legislation which poses a serious risk to public health and creates unnecessary monetary burdens upon hospitals and taxpayers.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2004

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, because of an emergency in my district, I missed rollcall votes No. 177, No. 178 and No. 179. If present I would have voted "yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM DeMINT

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 2004

Mr. DeMINT. Mr. Speaker, I was absent during rollcall votes 169, 170, 171, 172, 173,